

FOOD PURCHASING PRACTICES IN SELECTED REST, CONVALESCENT,  
AND BOARDING HOMES IN OHIO

By

Anita McCormick

Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

Ohio State University  
and

Ohio Agricultural Extension Service

FOOD PURCHASING PRACTICES IN SELECTED REST, CONVALESCENT,  
AND BOARDING HOMES IN OHIO

By  
Anita McCormick

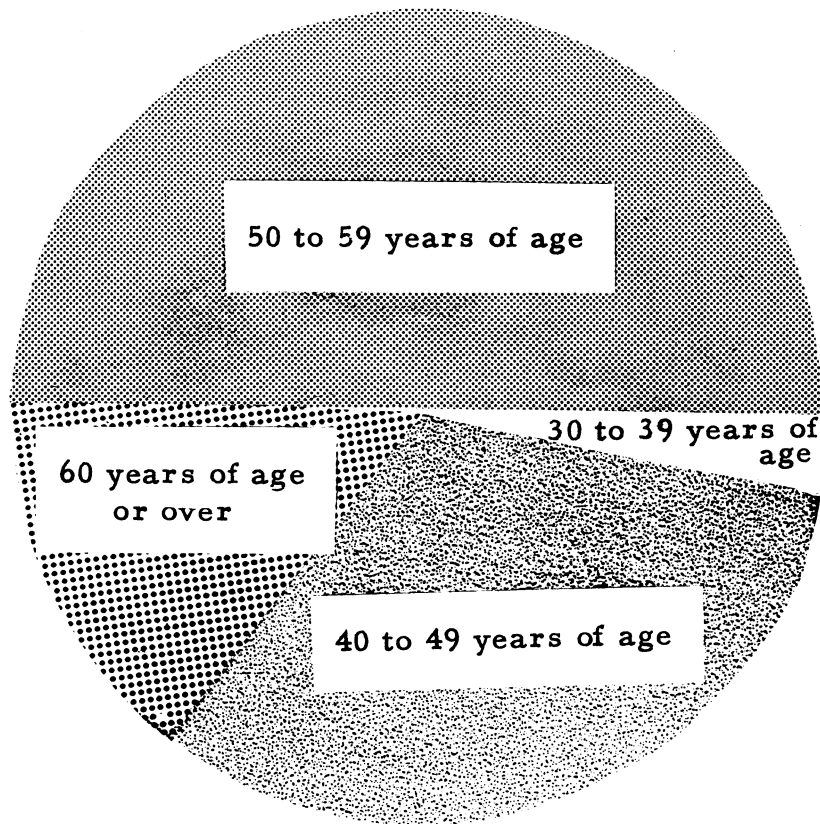
OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Food buyers in forty selected rest, convalescent, and  
boarding homes were interviewed during August, September,  
and October, 1956 in an attempt to:

1. Learn the present food purchasing practices of  
the homes;
2. Discover the sources of information the food  
buyers use that influence their food buying  
decisions;
3. Discover the kind and type of information the  
food buyers in these homes feel that they need  
and would use; and
4. Discover how often and in what form the food  
buyers would prefer to receive the desired  
information.

## AGE, TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOOD BUYERS

The age of the food buyers was estimated. (Plate I).

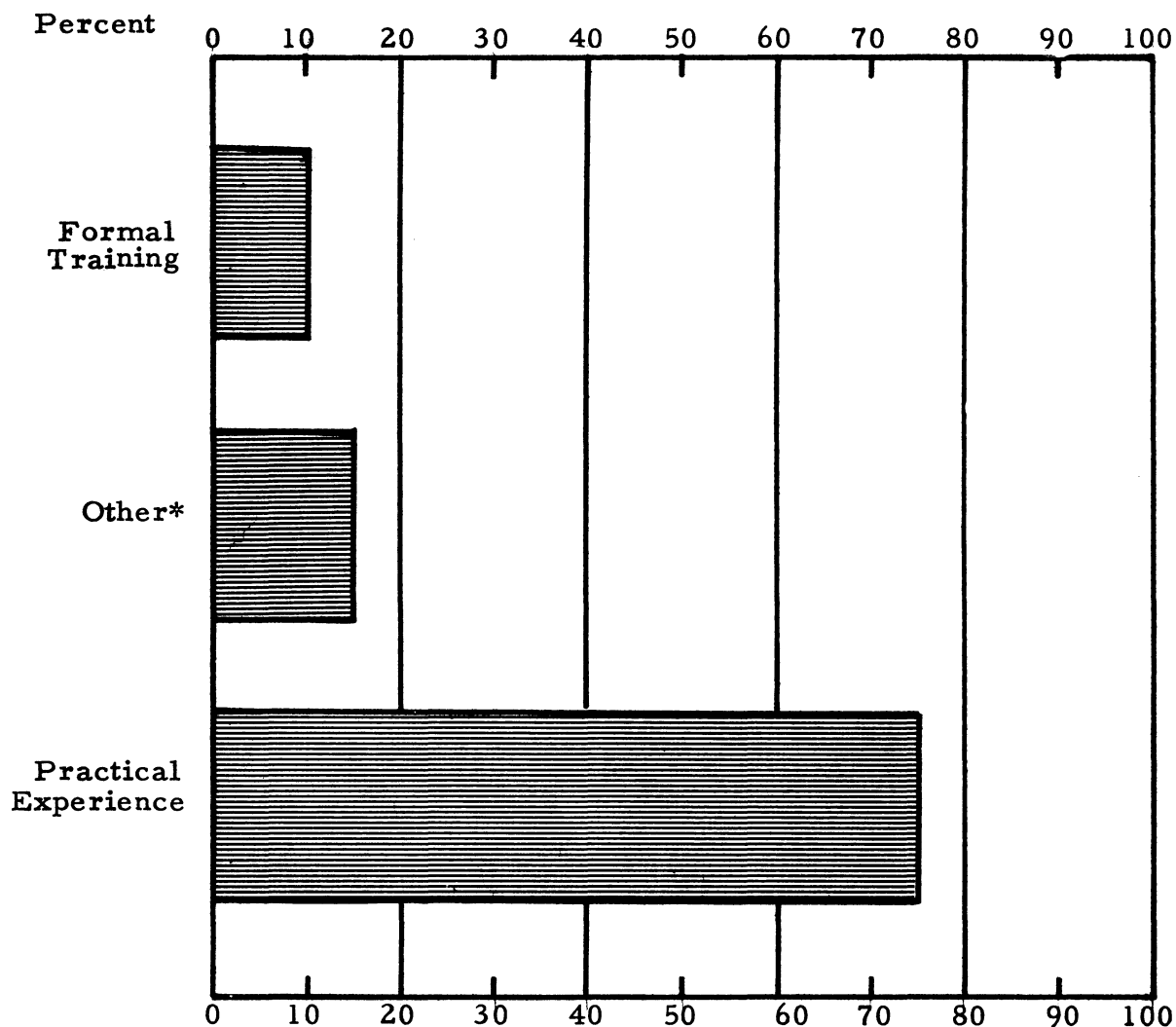


Estimated Age of Operators or Food Buyers

Practical experience was the training of many of the food buyers (Plate II).

Plate II

Percent of 40 Selected Rest, Convalescent, and  
Boarding Homes By Type of Training  
of Food Buyer, Ohio, 1956



\* Restaurant, hotel, teaching, and grocery experience.

Most of the food buyers had other responsibilities in addition to that of food service in the home.

95 percent were managers or operators of the home

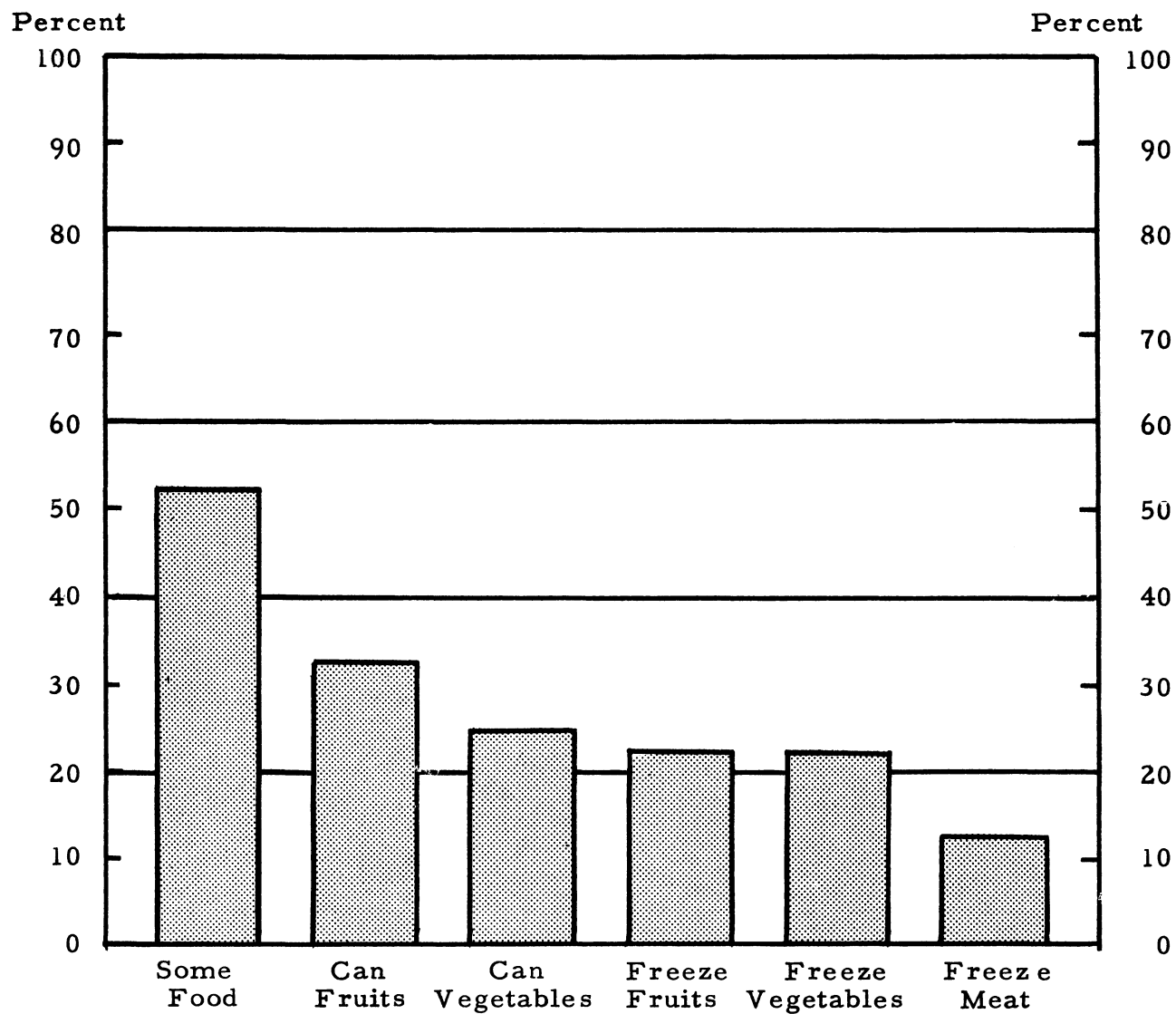
5 percent had only food service responsibilities

## HOME PRESERVATION OF FOOD

Home preservation of food was usually done by slightly more than one-half of the homes (Plate III).

Plate III

Percent of 40 Selected Rest, Convalescent, and  
Boarding Homes That Did Home Preservation  
of Food, By Type of Preservation Done,  
Ohio, 1956



## RECORD OF FOOD EXPENDITURES

Sixty percent of the food buyers reported costs of food.

20 percent reported costs per meal or recorded monthly or annual food bills

40 percent estimated the food costs

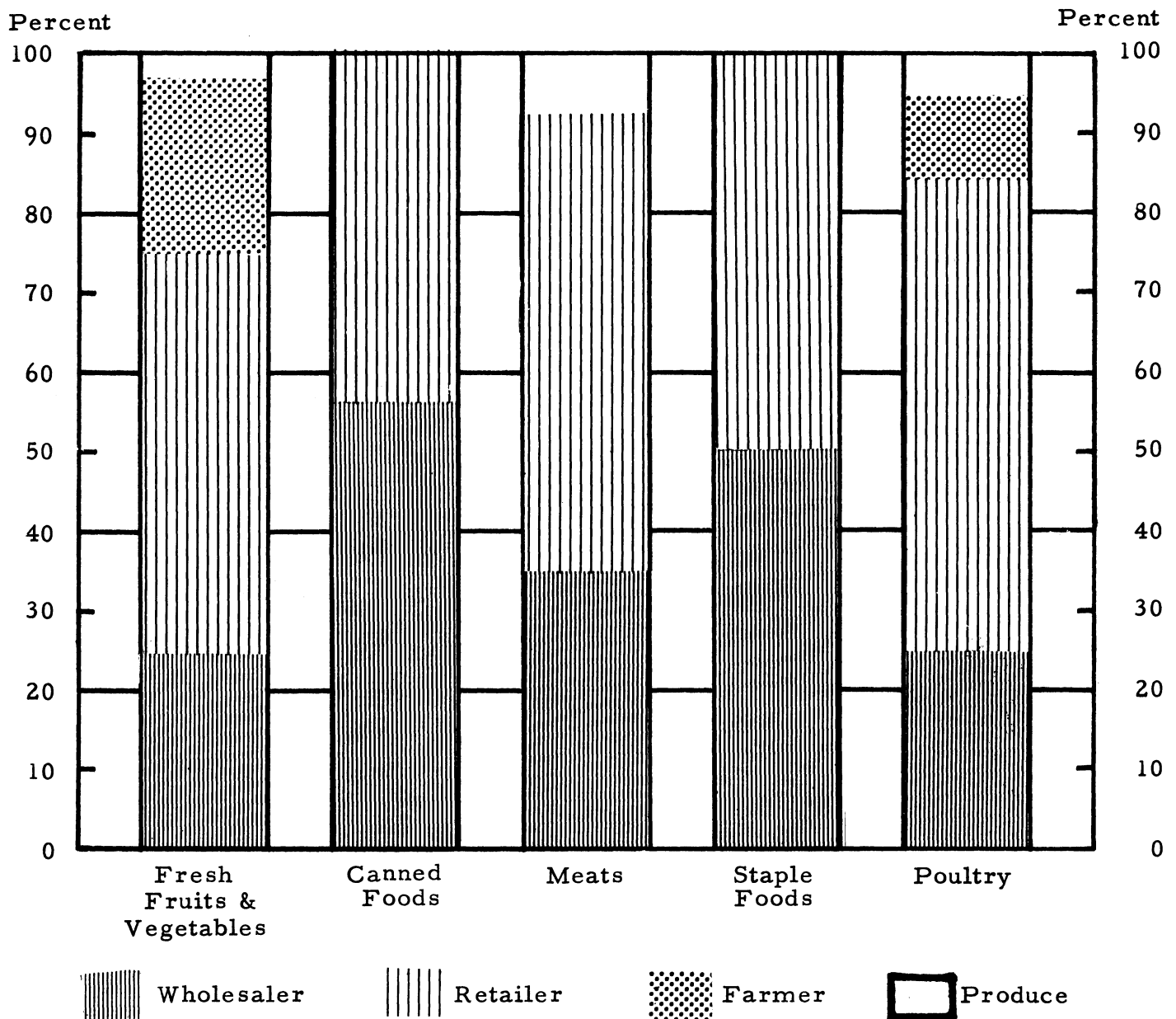
40 percent reported no estimate of food costs

## FOOD BUYING PRACTICES

Food buying practices vary among the homes as to the number and type of marketing organization from which foods are purchased and the frequency with which selected groups of foods are purchased (Plate IV and Plate V).

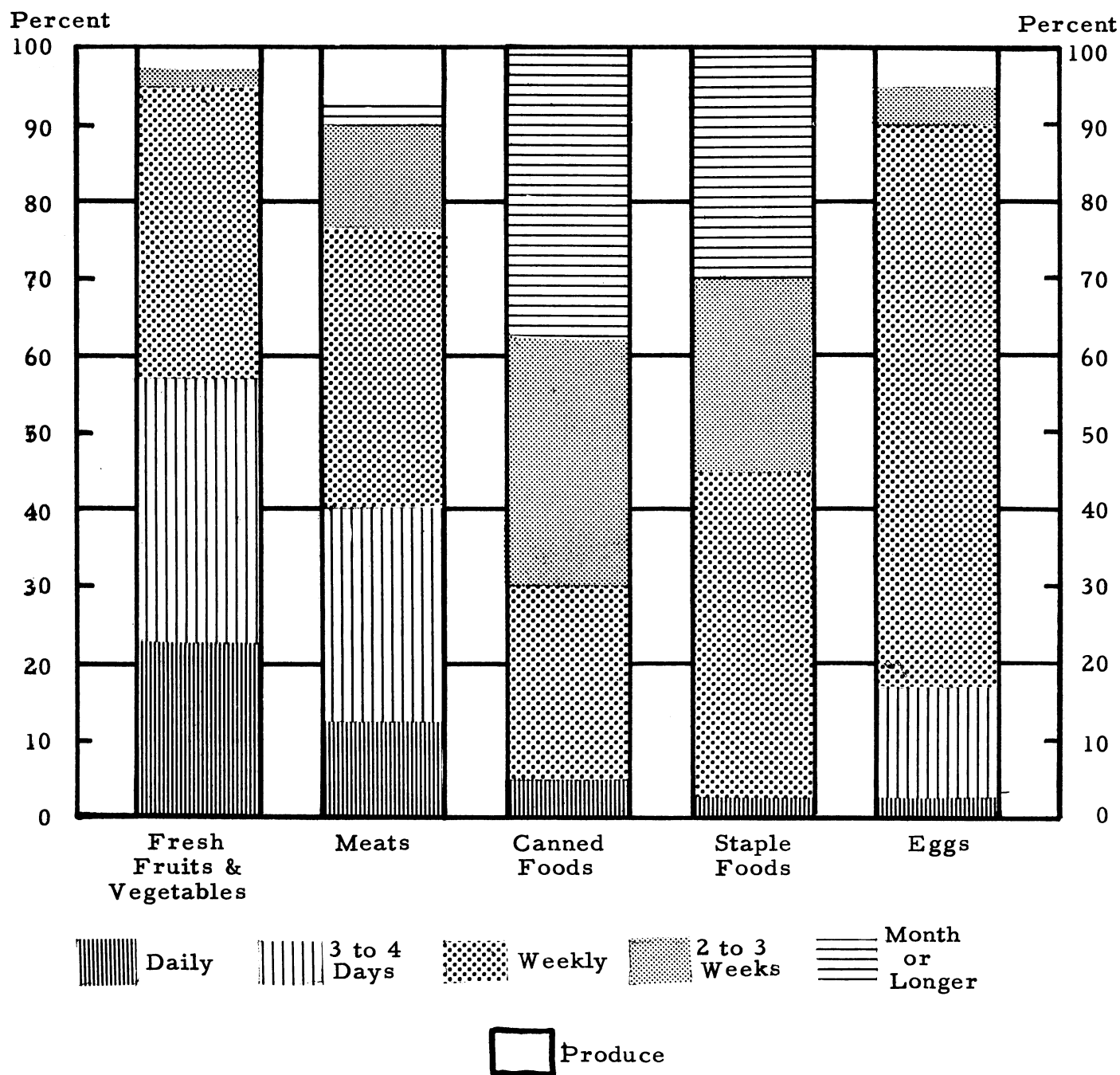
Plate IV

Percent of 40 Selected Rest, Convalescent, and  
Boarding Homes Purchasing Food By Type  
of Marketing Institution,  
Ohio, 1956



# Plate V

Percent of 40 Selected Rest, Convalescent, and Boarding Homes That Did Various Food Groups for Specific Periods of Time, Ohio, 1956





Many food buyers rely on the same dealer for each group of food purchased.

<u>Type of Food</u>	<u>Percent of Homes Relying on Same Dealer for Purchases</u>
Eggs	80.0
Staple Foods	75.0
Canned Foods	67.5
Meats	62.5
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	55.0

The number of patients served in the home apparently was a determining factor affecting the size of purchase unit of selected foods. Generally, the smaller the number of patients served, the smaller the purchase unit.

Percent of 40 Selected Rest, Convalescent and Boarding  
Homes Purchasing Selected Foods, By Size of Purchase  
Unit and By Number of Patients Served in the Home,  
Ohio, 1956

Food	Number of Patients				Total Percent
	30 or More	19 to 29	11 to 18	10 or Less	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
<u>Uncooked Cereal <sup>a/</sup></u>					
Family Unit	10.0	11.1	42.9	100.0	47.5
Case	90.0	88.8	42.9	-	50.0
100 lb. Bag	-	-	14.3	-	2.5
<u>Canned Fruits <sup>a/</sup></u>					
Consumer Can	-	-	-	71.4	25.0
Consumer Case	30.0	22.2	57.1	28.6	32.5
No. 10 Can	-	-	14.3	-	2.5
Case - No. 10 Cans	90.0	88.8	28.6	-	47.5
<u>Cottage Cheese <sup>b/</sup></u>					
1-pound	10.0	22.2	28.6	71.4	37.5
5-pound	60.0	77.8	57.1	14.3	47.5
10-pound	20.0	-	-	-	5.0
<u>Beef <sup>c/</sup></u>					
Quarter or More <sup>d/</sup>	20.0	-	14.3	35.7	20.0
Wholesale <sup>e/</sup>	20.0	44.4	28.6	-	20.0
Retail <sup>f/</sup>	40.0	44.4	71.3	57.1	52.5
Portion Control <sup>g/</sup>	20.0	44.4	14.3	-	17.5
Produce Own	20.0	11.1	-	7.1	10.0
<u>Oranges</u>					
Dozen or Bag	30.0	66.7	57.1	78.6	60.0
$\frac{1}{2}$ Crate	-	11.1	-	-	2.5
Crate	60.0	11.1	28.6	-	22.5
None	10.0	11.1	14.3	21.4	15.0

<sup>a/</sup> Some homes usually make purchases in two size units.

<sup>b/</sup> Ten percent of the homes do not use the product.

<sup>c/</sup> Ten percent of the homes purchase beef in more than one form.

<sup>d/</sup> "Quarter or More" means a quarter or more of a carcass.

<sup>e/</sup> "Wholesale" refers to a round of beef, whole chuck, etc.

<sup>f/</sup> "Retail" refers to cuts of meat as merchandised by retail food stores.

<sup>g/</sup> "Portion Control" refers to the purchase of meat by servings per pound--round steak, cut five servings to the pound, etc.

Few of the food buyers used government grade standards as a guide to quality when purchasing foods.

<u>Food</u>	<u>Percent of Homes Using Government Grade Standards</u>
Beef	62.5
Eggs	15.0
Canned Foods	10.0
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	7.5
Frozen Foods	2.5

When the food buyers that reported using government grade standards were asked what grade of beef they usually purchased, they reported as follows:

24 percent stated, "Prime," "Choice," or "Good;"

76 percent stated, "The best," "Grade A," "Whatever the dealer has," or "Don't Know."

Food buyers in the selected rest, convalescent, and boarding homes rely on many of the same sources of information for their food buying information as individual families do. These sources are:

Newspapers	Trade Magazines
Sales Representatives	Radio
Television	Popular Magazines

Market Releases

Eighty-seven and one-half percent of the food buyers indicated a need for additional help in buying food. The kind of help needed was:

<u>Kind of Help</u>	<u>Percent of Homes</u>
Use of Food	47.5
When to Buy	47.5
What to Buy	30.0
Selection Guides	10.0
Menu Planning	7.5
Quantity to Buy	5.0
Don't Know	5.0
Other	5.0
None	12.5

The food buyers indicated that they would like to receive help with their food buying in the following ways:

<u>Methods</u>	<u>Percent of Homes</u>
Newsletters	
Weekly	34.3
Bi-monthly	14.3
Monthly	14.3
Tri-monthly	2.9
Special	14.3
Trade Magazines	5.7
Training Meetings	2.9
Don't Know	20.0

## CONCLUSIONS

Food buyers in rest, convalescent and boarding homes are for the most part lay people with little special training or experience for their position as food buyers in small food service institutions. They expressed a need for assistance with their food buying problems. Educational food marketing programs for these food buyers must be developed for the lay person. Technical information on marketing practices, seasonal supplies, sources, nutrition, relative prices, selection and grades and standards must be interpreted for them.

Any food marketing educational program must approach the problem from the viewpoint of the operator or food buyer, that of more efficient operation of the home with adequate returns for the operator and nutritionally adequate, attractively prepared food for the patients or residents in the homes.

Small food service institution operators are among the groups that, in general, have not participated in the Cooperative Extension Service's educational program and so, are not familiar with the program. One of the first concerns of the Extension food marketing program would be to acquaint the food buyers and/or operators of these homes with the Cooperative Extension Service and its program.

The largest percentage of the food buyers preferred to receive food buying information in the form of a weekly newsletter.

The newsletter should contain information regarding:

1. Present and prospective relative supplies and prices of food products;
2. Seasonality of food products;
3. Uses of food currently in plentiful supply;
4. Nutritional data to enable food buyers to make wise food buying decisions;
5. Available marketing facilities;
6. Grades and standards of quality;
7. Other food purchasing guides that would provide food buyers with information to enable them to make the most efficient use of their resources-- time, energy, and money; and
8. Marketing costs.

LONG RANGE PROGRAM PLANNING IN MARKETING EDUCATION  
FOR FOOD BUYERS OF REST, CONVALESCENT  
AND BOARDING HOMES

1. Secure cooperation of a committee of food buyers representing the rest, convalescent and boarding homes of all sizes and types in planning an educational food marketing program.
2. Cooperate with the Ohio Association of Nursing Homes, The Association of Ohio Philanthropic Homes for the Aged and the several county associations in developing an educational food marketing program.
3. Cooperate with state, county and municipal health department nutritionists and Extension nutrition specialists in a program to improve dietary and nutritional standards in the homes by better food buying practices.
4. Develop with a pilot group of food buyers an easy, but complete method for recording food expenditures.
5. Initiate further studies on the comparison of retail and wholesale food prices to determine price advantage, if any, in making purchases from wholesale marketing organizations.
6. Initiate studies to determine basis for present purchasing practices. For example, why do many food buyers rely on the same dealer? Why do many homes purchase from retail marketing organizations?

This report is a summary of a thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science by the author.

The author wishes to give special acknowledgement to Dr. Ralph W. Sherman, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, The Ohio State University, whose friendly counsel and guidance in planning the study and preparing the thesis were greatly appreciated.